























- 1  **The Vietnam War**  
1959 - 1975
- 3  **Historical Background**
  - 100 BC – 900 AD: Chinese invade and rule Vietnam.
  - Vietnamese had a distinct and independent culture, but they did adopt Buddhism and Confucianism from Chinese.
  - 16<sup>th</sup> century: Arrival of Europeans → First Portuguese, then French
- 4  **French colonialism**
  - 1885: French occupy Vietnam.
  - Vietnamese rebel and fight for years.
  - French lump Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos together. Call it “Indochina”
- 5  **French colonialism**
- 6  **French colonialism**
  - How do you think colonial society would have been structured?
  - What were the economic and political effects of colonialism in Vietnam?
- 7  **1940 - 45: Japanese control**
  - 1940: French defeated by Germans, French Indochina left defenceless.
  - Japanese easily invade Vietnam, aim was to cut off supplies for the Chinese.
  - Japanese set up a brutally suppressive regime.
- 8  **Vietnamese national identity**
  - 1945: How would the farmers have felt after French colonialism and then World War II under the Japanese?
  - How do you think the Communist take-over in China (1949) would have made the Vietnamese feel?
- 9  **Ho Chi Minh**
  - Leader of Communist Vietminh party
  - Lived 1890 – 1968
  - Worked in London 1914
  - Studied Karl Marx in Paris in 1917 and became a communist.
  - Set up Vietnamese Communist Party in 1930 and League of Independence in 1941
- 10  **Ho Chi Minh**
  - Before this lesson, what did you know about Ho Chi Minh?
  - Why do you think Ho Chi Minh became communist?
  - What other communist leaders were contemporaries with Ho Chi Minh? How would they have influenced him?
  - What attributes does a good leader need?
- 11  **1<sup>st</sup> Indo China War**
  - 1945: According to the “Geneva Accords”, UK troops landed in South Vietnam to disarm Japanese forces, while Nationalist Chinese Army did same in North Vietnam.
  - British and Chinese forces met at the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel.
  - Both allied forces were later to hand over to the French and withdraw.
- 12  **1<sup>st</sup> Indo China War: 1946 - 1954**
  - But in China a civil war started (ending with Mao Tse Tung Communist takeover in 1949) so Chinese retreated quickly from North Vietnam.
  - The French wanted to re-establish themselves as colonial power in Vietnam.
- 13  **1<sup>st</sup> Indo China War: 1946 - 1954**
  - The Communist Vietminh (led by Ho Chi Minh) successfully fought the French in the North.
  - This was called “The first Indochina war”
  - 1954: Battle at DIEN BIEN PHU ended with a clear Vietnamese victory.
- 14  **Meanwhile, in the US**
  - Red Scare = a fear in society, media and politics that communism would upset the capitalist social order in the US.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Red Scare: 1947 to 1957, fear of (national and foreign) communists infiltrating the US Gov.

- Senator Joe McCarthy
- 15  **Meanwhile, in North East Asia**
  - Korean War: 1950 -1953
  - First manifestation of US "containment" policy → Domino theory
  - US, Aus and NZ soldiers fight in a difficult and unpopular war.
  - Dividing Korea in a communist and capitalist part seemed to have worked there.....??
- 16  **1954: Division of Vietnam**
  - In 1954, French gave up.
  - "Geneva accords":  
Vietnam was divided along the 17th parallel:
  - Communist North Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh (*supported by Soviets and China*)
  - and South Vietnam under Ngô Đình Diệm (*supported by France and US*)
- 17  **Jean Baptiste Ngo Dinh Diem**
  - "Diem": President of South Vietnam: 1955 -1963
  - Authoritarian, nepotistic, arrogant, corrupt, anti-Buddhist
  - Supported by US and French because he was anti-communist.
  - Diem was a Catholic. About 1 million Vietnamese Catholics fled from North Vietnam to South Vietnam.
- 18  **Vietnam 1954 - 1961**
  - According to "Geneva accords":  
General election for the WHOLE country was to be held in 1956 so Vietnam could reunite under either *Ho Chi Minh* or *Diem*.
  - Farmers had been treated miserably by French and Japanese for years.
  - Communist Party was popular amongst farmers in north and south.
- 19  **Vietnam 1954 - 1961**
  - 1956: Diem refuses to accept a nation-wide election!
  - 100,000 Southern protesters imprisoned or killed by Diem.
- 20  **US Presidents during Vietnam War**
  - Harry Truman:  
1945 - 1953
  - Dwight Eisenhower:  
1953 - 1961
  - John F Kennedy:  
1961 - 1963
  - Lyndon Johnson:  
1963 - 1969
  - Richard Nixon:  
1969 - 1974
- 21  **American involvement starts**
  - 1961: Eisenhower and Kennedy first sent 'advisers' to help the South.
  - 1965: President Johnson sent in a fighting force.
  - The war continued until 1973 when President Nixon agreed to a ceasefire. All American soldiers left.
  - By 1976 the whole of Vietnam was Communist and its neighbours Cambodia and Laos soon followed.
- 22  **Why did America go to war in Vietnam?**
  - The USA went to war in Vietnam to protect non-communist South Vietnam from the Soviet supported Communist North.
  - This was in accordance with the Domino Theory and the US policy of Containment.
- 25  **Domino Theory**
  - "If Indochina falls, Thailand is put in an almost impossible position. The same is true of Malaya with its rubber and tin. The same is true of Indonesia. If this whole part of South East Asia goes under Communist domination or Communist influence, Japan, who trades and must trade with this area in order to exist, must inevitably be oriented towards the

Communist regime."

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### **Domino Theory**

- H. W. Baldwin, New York Times Magazine, (February 21, 1965)
- *"Vietnam is a nasty place to fight. But there are no neat and tidy battlefields in the struggle for freedom; there is no 'good' place to die. And it is far better to fight in Vietnam - on China's doorstep - than fight some years hence in Hawaii, on our own frontiers."*

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### **Australia's involvement**

- PM Robert Menzies sends advisers in 1962
- Combat troops in 1965.

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### **Reasons for Australia's involvement**

- Australia was (and is) member of two regional defence pacts: ANZUS (*Australia, New Zealand and United States*) and SEATO (*Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation*).
- Fear of Communism on our doorstep.

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### **The Vietnam war**

- In Vietnam the war is called 'the American War'
- The Vietnam War began in earnest for US forces in 1965
- It did not end for them until early 1973 and even then the United States continued to back its South Vietnamese allies until their defeat in April 1975 by North Vietnam.

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### **Your assignment topics:**

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- Peace movements and protests
- Use of napalm / agent orange
- Tet Offensive
- Life for civilians
- The role of TV / Media
- Vietcong
- The tunnel systems
- Guerrilla warfare
- Mai Lai massacre
- Spotting the enemy

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- A soldier's story
- A journalists on the ground
- Fighting in the jungle
- Medivacs
- Weapons of Vietnam
- Vietnam vets
- American withdrawal from Vietnam
- Returning home
- The girl in the picture (Phan Thị Kim Phúc)

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### **Reasons for popularity of the Vietcong**

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### **Aus PMs during Vietnam War**

- Chifley 1945- 1949
- Menzies 1949- 1966
- Holt 1966 - 1967
- McEwen 1967 - 1968
- Gorton 1968 - 1971
- McMahon 1971 - 1972
- Whitlam 1972- 1975